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Congress of the United States House of Representatives

Washington. DC 20515-3103 April 13, 2005

> The Honorable David Obey Ranking Member House Subcommittee on Labor, HHS, Education and Related Agencies 1016 Longworth HOB Washington, DC 20515

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Dear Chairman Regula and Representative Obey,

The Honorable Ralph Regula

House Subcommittee on Labor, HHS.

Education, and Related Agencies

We write to request restoration of the funding for the CDC's Preventive Health and Health Services Block Grant program to the FY05 appropriated level. This important program provides critical dollars to address a variety of public health issues in our respective states, and should be maintained.

There are few grants, other than the Preventive Health and Health Services Block Grant, that states may use to address their own unique health challenges in exciting and innovative ways. Many states have documented that investing Block Grant dollars results in improved health care outcomes and significant cost savings.

State and local health departments have used the Preventive Health and Health Services Block Grant to address issues such as cardiovascular disease, diabetes, physical activity, oral health, child car seat safety, residential fire deaths, foodborne infections, and suicide prevention. Block Grant funding is used to address important health issues for which there is no other federal support, for underfunded public health priorities, and to respond to unanticipated public health emergencies, such as e. coli outbreaks or the appearance of the West Nile Virus.

In addition to these varied uses, the block grant is also the primary source of flexible funding that provides states the latitude to fund any of 265 national health care objectives available in the Nation's Healthy People 2010 Health Improvement Plan. Healthy People 2010 sets national health objectives designed to identify the most significant preventable threats to health and to establish national goals to reduce these threats. The nation's investment in prevention is less than 5 percent of the annual health care costs despite strong evidence that prevention can be cost effective and helps people enhance the quality of life. We must work to devote greater resources to prevention. Eliminating funding for this program is a major step in precisely the wrong direction.

BRANCH OFFICES

While we appreciate the difficult fiscal situation you will be facing when determining funding levels for FY06, we strongly believe that the Preventive Health and Health Services Block Grant program is a wise use of federal funds. Eliminating the program will force state and local health departments to eliminate or drastically reduce some of their most important public health activities.

For these reasons, we respectfully request that you restore funding for the Preventive Health and Health Services block grant program to the FY05 appropriated level. Thank you for your attention to our request. We look forward to working with you on this and other important public health issues in the future.

Sincerely,
Tom Udall Sue Kelly
Henry Waxman Mike McIntyre Oale E. Chican Dale Kildee
Barbara Lee Jim McDermott Ben Chandler Ben Chandler
Norman Dicks Earl Pomeroy Chris Van Hollen
Grace Napolitano Raul Grijalva Robert Wexler

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